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Looking back on past research experience it would seem that at times, when faced with unforeseen challenges, the journey often seems as though the appearance of the light at the end of the tunnel is nothing more than a mirage, provoked by a researcher's own biased belief that there is a story to be told. When this mirage becomes a reality, it is usually at that point that we take the glory of breakthrough away from ourselves and resolve that the find was a coincidence, a chance, a sheer stroke of researchers' luck, or was it? What I found interesting was that on both occasions when such a breakthrough was experienced the information found was invaluable. In both cases professional bodies would turn to the power of discourse to obscure individuals and or groups that had any contradictory thoughts to their own, regardless of the possible merits. The following paper will focus on two such research events experienced by the authors. It will be argued, in both cases, that discovery of previously unknown or little known facts were more a case of serendipity than fortuitousness. The first research journey will deal with a study of Australian women in accounting revealing evidence suggesting that the first women admitted to one of the antecedent bodies of peak professional accounting association was an Australian. The second research journey will address the findings of an archival study of the standard setting process in Australia, demonstrating the silencing of the views of a prominent and outspoken Australian academic.

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PUZZLES AND SERENDIPITY

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Abstract

Looking back on past research experience it would seem that at times, when faced with unforeseen challenges, the journey chosen seems as though the appearance of the light at the end of the tunnel is nothing more than a mirage, provoked by a researcher's own biased belief that there is a story to be told. When this mirage becomes a reality, it is usually at that point that we take the glory of breakthrough away from ourselves and resolve that the find was a coincidence, a chance, a sheer stroke of researchers luck, or was it? What I found interesting was that on both occasions when such a breakthrough was experienced the information found was invaluable. In both cases professional bodies would turn to the power of discourse to obscure individuals and or groups that had any contradictory thoughts to their own, regardless of the possible merits. The following paper will focus on two such research events experienced by the authors. It will be argued, in both cases, that discovery of previously unknown or little known facts were more a case of serendipity than fortuitousness. The first research journey will deal with a study of Australian women in accounting revealing evidence suggesting that the first women admitted to one of the antecedent bodies of peak professional accounting association was an Australian. The second research journey will address the findings of an archival study of the standard setting process in Australia, demonstrating the silencing of the views of a prominent and outspoken Australian academic.

Key Words: discourse, power, status quo, standard setting process

INTRODUCTION

For centuries the accounting profession worldwide has been criticised for doing nothing but reinventing the wheel. The Australian accounting profession was no exception, often failing in its endeavours to find suitable solutions to vital problems plaguing the profession, its members and ultimately the wider business community. When a solution was purported to have been found, more often than not it was a simple adaptation of other already tried, tested and discarded methods and techniques undertaken by our overseas counterparts. Ironically, one of the main accounting principles underlying the basis of the accounting regulatory framework is that of disclosure. The accounting profession as a whole, accountants, auditors and the like are concerned, amongst other things, about ensuring that adequate disclosure has been undertaken by corporations when presenting their financial statements. A true and fair view of an entities financial position underpins the accounting standards, mandatory standards that disclose the proper actions of organisations in their everyday business activity. Yet, when the professional bodies are required to give account of their contribution to improving the accounting regulatory framework, disclosure has not been a priority, its credibility, however, has been.

This paper will explore two research journeys which provide confirmation to the argument that the accounting profession has been preoccupied with the attainment and maintaining of its status quo

Two such research journeys will be explored, both with different themes but identical outcomes. In both cases the journey to substantiate the major theory or theme of the research undertaken was difficult, hindered either due to a lack of cooperation from critical parties or simply because the information sought was believed to exist, the vital task being, to unearth this information's existence. The major themes of the two research journeys are very different the first focuses on giving recognition to where recognition is due, to the first lady being admitted into an accounting professional body, Australia's very own Mary Addison. Our second research journey is a much more controversial theme and provides insight into the difficulties faced in locating required information, unlike our first research project, difficulty was encountered due to a direct lack of cooperation by critical parties. *Accounting Through the Looking Glass: A Reflection of Twentieth Century Accounting Crises – The Mad Hatter's Tea Party and the Measurement Debate* (Kurtovic 2000), argues that the accounting profession was more preoccupied by maintaining its status quo and protecting its own economic self – interest at the detriment of protecting the public interest. Focusing on continual criticism that the accounting profession was guilty of repeatedly recycling old issues and making them new again (Kurtovic and Cooper, 1997), the study sought to substantiate this disparagement and attempt to conclude the reasons for such behaviour. Choosing the long running measurement debate, focus was placed on the Australian Accounting Research Foundation (AARF) as it was this extended arm of the accounting bodies that was given the task of ensuring that a suitable solution to the measurement debate was found. What was found during the course of the project would become vital in understanding why the accounting profession had a penchant to recycle vital accounting issues and why the accusation of “doing nothing” was justifiable. The further into the research we went the more difficult became the journey as invisible yet observable walls were being put up.

SERENDIPITY

Finding the woman who was identified in the UK accounting professional journal, *The Accountant* (1918a, p.228; 1918b, p.212) as the first woman admitted into a ‘legitimate’ professional body was very much serendipity. The finding out more about her was a mixture of serendipity, good luck and research.

The first mention found of Mary Addison Hamilton (generally known as Addie) was in *Reflections. Profiles of 150 Women who helped make Western Australia's history* (Popham, 1978, p.133). The short piece on Addie provided us with some details of her life that directed further investigation. For example, Addie, an only child, was born in Victoria and moved to Western Australia when she was six years old. She entered the Civil Service (now referred to as Public Service) at the age of 15 and became the first woman to attain a position as a permanent clerk in administration. While working, Addie attended night classes at Perth Technical School leading to her acceptance into membership of the West Australian Institute of Accountants. The Institute subsequently became one of the many accounting bodies in Australia to unite and form the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia. Addie was very active in community life becoming honorary treasurer and life member of the Royal Life Saving Society, honorary auditor of the Women's Service Guilds, honorary treasurer and

accountant-auditor for various organisations including the National Council of Women, the Pan-Pacific and South-east Asia Women's Association and the Catholic Women's League.

In order to discover the source of the claims that Addie was the first woman chartered accountant in the world, a volume by volume search of *The Accountant* from 1913 to 1918 was conducted. *The Accountant* is the official journal of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). Each edition of *The Accountant* contained reference to examinations in the UK and elsewhere and the results and *Letters to the Editor* on various matters including what was happening in affiliated organisations outside the United Kingdom. These were the initial targets of the search. The first part of the search ended with the discovery in *The Accountant* (1918a, 1918b) of two references to Mary Addison Hamilton and her membership of the West Australian Institute of Accountants. Unfortunately, further details about Addie were not forthcoming from *The Accountant*.

An attempt to gather information from the Royal Life Saving Society was fruitless as it no longer existed in its 1960's form and membership records had not survived the transition to a new organisation. The Catholic Women's League in Perth was an improvement. A local member with an interest in history was able to find some biographical material on Addie and her family. A trip to Perth was organised in order to meet with the member from the Catholic Women's League and search archival material at the Perth offices of CPA Australia and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and at the Battye Library.

Little information other than what we already had was uncovered at the offices of the professional bodies. The State Library, however, was most fruitful. By sheer accident, records of Addie's employment with the West Australian Education Department were found. We were given directions to the archival material but mistakenly went to the wrong counter where, by sheer coincidence, the staff member had only recently taken delivery of microfiche records from the WA Public Service. These records were not yet on the library's database. The records were hand written and not complete but it was possible to trace Addie's employment for at least 3 years. The West Australia (1909-1952) Public Service List provided brief details of Addie's employment history up to the time of her retirement in 1952.

Mary Addison Hamilton provided an outstanding example upon which all members of the accounting profession could model themselves. In spite of adversity and discrimination, she completed her accounting studies with distinction and was awarded an accounting prize for her outstanding study achievements. Even though she was never given the opportunity to pursue accounting as a career, Addie did not turn her back on her profession, instead Addie contributed to it by teaching and helping others to become accountants. While her public service records indicate she was paid for her teaching and related services to accounting education, Addie gave her services to many charitable and social organisations free of charge. Mary Addison Hamilton may be gone but her legacy as an accountant dedicated to improving the lives of others should be remembered and celebrated.

THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY AND THE MEASUREMENT DEBATE: MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL STATUS QUO RATHER THAN PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST

*and ever since that, the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, he
wo'n't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now. A bright*

idea came into Alice's head. Is that the reason so many tea - things are put out here? She asked. Yes, that's it, said the Hatter with a sigh: it's always tea - time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles. Then you keep moving round, I suppose? Said Alice. Exactly so, said the Hatter: as things get used up. But what happens when you come to the beginning again? Alice ventured to ask. Suppose we change the subject, the March Hare interrupted, yawning (Carroll 1982, 64).

Throughout the twentieth century the accounting profession both here and abroad were criticised for “doing nothing” (Lee 1990, i). Rather than protecting the public interest, the basis upon which many accounting professional associations were formed, some argued that the professional bodies were more concerned with attaining and maintaining its dominance within a specialised body of knowledge and therefore its own economic-self interest. The aim of the above mentioned study was to substantiate continual claims and accusations (see also Lee 1990, Mumford 1979, Brief 1975) that the accounting profession was “doing nothing” and try and bring an understanding as to the reason behind such behaviour. In order to succeed in meeting the research aim, it was necessary to answer two important questions;

- Why is it that the accounting profession continually recycles important accounting issues?
And
- How is it that the accounting profession was and still is permitted to recycle important accounting information?

To adequately answer the questions proposed, the above mentioned research study, focused on the asset measurement debate in Australia, closely examining the activities of the Australian Accounting Research Foundation (AARF). At the time that the above mentioned study was undertaken the AARF, an extended arm of both professional bodies, was considered to have had a fundamental influence in finding a solution to the measurement debate, the question which had to be addressed was just how much of an influence the AARF had on ensuring that the measurement debate remained unresolved.

DELIBERATE OBSTRUCTION TO ARCHIVAL ACCESS

I have answered three questions, and that is enough, said his father. Don't give yourself airs! Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff? Be off, or I'll kick you down-stairs! (Carroll 1982, 44).

Research for this study had relied extensively on archival information, in particular that of the AARF which played a vital role in the work towards sustaining an adequate method of measurement. Throughout a two year period an in-depth archival research had been conducted at the head office of the AARF, as the information required went well beyond readily available publications. It was necessary to delve into primary source documents contained in the archives of the AARF in order to retrace the activities of the foundation and determine whether or not the AARF contributed to the apparent lack of progress the accounting profession, as a whole, made regarding the measurement debate.

The greatest challenge faced throughout the research period was the obtaining of necessary information to effectively undertake the study. After ascertaining that valuable information may be available I had approached the AARF requesting permission to use their archives. The initial request was quickly rejected. Based on the concept of “freedom of information” and

fact that other academics had already accessed the archives of the AARF and after intensive negotiations I was hesitantly welcomed into what was often a hostile environment, to try and piece together the activities of the AARF throughout the most critical and controversial years of the measurement debate.

Continual hindrances, including, a malfunctioning photocopier, a lack of toner and or missing archival boxes all contributed to the difficulty of gathering the information required, yet none were successful in stopping the research from taking place. Soon after beginning to review the contents of the AARF's archives it became clear that a mammoth task was ahead of me. Not only were there hundred's of boxes and thousands of documents to review, it was necessary to photocopy any and all information that at that point in time was considered to be vital for inclusion in the research. After having my request to bring in a research partner to assist me denied by representatives of the AARF, it became evident that time was of the essence. After reviewing the AARF's records during various intervals spanning a period of two years and thousands of photocopies later I believed I had much of the required information.

Although the entire process took a long time, it was worth the work, for not only would the information collected become vital and original as much of it was never disclosed to the wider public, the original documents were destroyed by the AARF (during a cleanup of the archives), soon after I completed my research.

PUBLIC INTEREST: A SMOKESCREEN FOR PROTECTING THE PROFESSION AND ITS OWN ECONOMIC SELF – INTEREST

After hours, days and months of carefully reviewing and piecing together the data gathered from the archives of the AARF and any interviews undertaken with AARF staff, it became apparent that the answers sought were found. There were legitimate grounds for critics to accuse the accounting profession of “doing nothing”, as the primary source documents gathered at the AARF clearly indicated the want to protect the professions own dominance and self – interest. Why was there such a penchant to recycle accounting issues, to reinvent the wheel? The answer was found in the AARF's determination to attain and maintain its status quo rather than protect the public interest, as doing so would ensure that the AARF's place and dominance would be maintained within the business community. There would be a justification for its continued existence. The answer to how it was that the accounting profession was permitted to recycle important information, giving the perception of “doing nothing” was also found in the archives of the AARF.

The study confirmed that rather than adhering to the profession's claim of protecting the public interest, the motives of the AARF were tainted by the apparent need to obtain and maintain domination, thereby protecting its status quo. This was never more apparent than at a time of economic crisis when the AARF's ability as an organisation was often questioned. Thus after many months of research, the initial mirage, previously spoken about, became a reality as it became possible to demonstrate that during the height of the measurement debate in the 1970's and 1980's the AARF attained domination, and used this domination to influence the thoughts and actions of other individuals and groups within the business community. By creating a smokescreen the AARF was permitted to continually recycle vital issues, including that of asset measurement.

One of the many interesting facts that were uncovered from the AARF's archives was the true story behind the formation of the AARF, the real story which was never really made public.

Dr Kurtovic, Dr Cooper

AARF's formation being a professional ploy in a time of crisis as the accounting profession worked hard to restore its own professional credibility. During the 1960's the Australian accounting profession was faced with a surge of criticism. This was the decade that brought to an end the post-war economic bloom as incorrigible damage had been done to the profession's reputation, which would perhaps take a lifetime to restore.

By the mid sixties a new form of criticism was directed at the accounting profession. Following the collapse of several prominent corporations, Government inquiries were commissioned examining the reasons for the collapses. Unexpected company failures coupled with harmful criticism against the accounting profession began to dominate the business news. Large apparently affluent organisations that had only months or even weeks earlier reported substantial profits had begun to report losses of millions of dollars. The common thread through all of these failed corporations was that up until their collapse, their financial statements portrayed them as opulent corporations with outstanding potential at least that was the indication given by the financial reports. This apparent allowance of misleading financial information by the profession later gave rise to many vital issues being examined, measurement being one of the first.

Most of the blame for the unexpected corporate collapses was placed at the feet of the accounting profession. Further it was presumed by many that the accounting profession was either unwilling or unable to remedy the problem on their own. As indicated in previous quotes, it was not long before the government responded, indicating that they were more than willing to step in to rectify the problem;

the State Government was going to lose no time in taking steps necessary to protect people and correct bad business practices...the present situation shows that such protection is long overdue (Australian Financial Review September 11 1962, 6).

The Formation of the AARF A Ploy for Survival

Buried under an avalanche of criticism and calls for government intervention (Australian Financial Review November 23 1966, 2), the onus was on the accounting profession to respond, the future of the profession had to be rescued particularly with the threat of outside intervention. In response a rumor had begun to circulate, claiming that a "revolution" within the accounting profession was about to take place. This revolution would prove to be the formation of the AARF.

The accounting profession in Australia reached a critical stage. Its attempts, much of which relied heavily on British accounting practice, to adequately develop accounting principles and improve accounting practice failed dismally. It was at this point in time that the Research Foundation made its timely appearance. Aptly using the term research in its title, the Foundation was formed at a time when despite decades of so-called research, this is the conducting of congresses and various lectures amongst other events, corporate collapses were still taking place and the accounting profession's credibility was declining (Kurtovic 2000). The formation of the AARF was yet another defense mechanism used by the professional bodies in the war against criticism. The profession claimed that the Research Foundation was formed in order to rectify this problem

The AARF has been established by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and the Australian Society of Accountants to consolidate and strengthen the previous efforts of the two bodies in the development and review of accounting

and auditing standards, in accounting research, and in other important areas of technical activity (Kurtovic 2000, 145).

Yet, there is evidence to suggest that the Research Foundation was a strategic move on the profession's part to help restore faith in an increasingly mistrusted profession.

Solace was found in the term research; Australian accounting journals became enthralled with the research efforts taken up by accounting professions overseas, particularly in the United States. Throughout the next two decades the Australian accounting profession would undertake various activities, all in the name of research. The first of these activities being the formation of the AARF whose genesis can be traced back to 1959 at the Australian Society of Accountants Convention at Mt Eliza. Unbeknown to many it was at this convention that Mr. Stanley Korman, chairman of Stanhill Consolidated, (who would later face fraud charges and serve time in jail) pledged to donate to the Australian Society of Accountants ten thousand pounds over a period of five years in aid of research.

The genesis of the Research Foundation can be traced back to 1959, at the Australian Society of Accountants Convention at Mt Eliza. It was at this convention that Mr. Stanley Korman, chairman of Stanhill Consolidated, pledged to donate to the Australian Society of Accountants ten thousand pounds over a period of five years in aid of research. Documents show that this generous donation took a while before it was made public. In fact it was not until late September 1959, over one month after the initial pledge that an official response was made to Korman;

For some time, this Society has had under consideration various means of undertaking much needed research and investigation into unresolved problems of accounting. Your imaginative interest in the matter presents us with an opportunity to approach the task on a scale, which will have important influences on accounting in Australia and possibly overseas. We are most grateful to you for your offer and hope that the plans can soon be made more widely known and appreciated (Kurtovic 2000,26).

Unfortunately right from its inception the objectivity of the AARF could be questioned. According to source documents from the AARF archives, Stanley Korman had a great concern and interest in having Australian accounting standards accepted overseas. Almost six months after Korman's "generous" offer and after countless meetings with representatives from both professional bodies, it was announced that the professional bodies have agreed to set up a research foundation to which this money would be given. Once knowing what Korman wanted his money to be put towards, the professional bodies too began to advocate the need to have accounting standards accepted overseas (Kurtovic 2000, 27).

The fact that the profession had suddenly become interested in this issue was considered to be a coincidence by Korman, who declared that it was

rather a coincidence that no sooner than I made the suggested contribution, that I find the necessity of having such principle of international understanding of accounting so desirable to the welfare of our country (Kurtovic, 2000, 31).

The most recent publication outlining the history of the AARF, acknowledged that at the time in question, the professional bodies had to take immediate action. Faced with the promise of

a substantial donation and public criticism mounting, the professional bodies knew that action had to be taken a long - term strategy was required,

if the profession could not find a way to clarify accounting principles in the public interest either some Government regulatory body would be set up to do so or it would be done by piece-meal/ legislation (Burrows 1996, 16).

This long-term strategy, being the formation of the AARF, a self-created smokescreen that would help minimise the criticism the profession faced, and in turn it would help ensure that there was no threat of outside intervention. The accounting profession could not face losing its self regulating status. However, the simple formation of the AARF was sufficient to start with, but the community wanted to see more action as a result. Academics and practitioners alike began to question the AARF and its activities, no longer was the formation of a body or committee sufficient, results were expected.

DISPELLING THE MYTH OF PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST

To the outside world, the AARF was continually working towards a better economic climate, listening and responding to the needs of those whom they were to serve and protect. Publicly, the newly formed Research Foundation, with the support of the Society and Institute, set out on a journey to answer the calls of help, or so it was thought. However, from within the Foundation, a different story emerges. It is a story of deceit and greed, not a lust for monetary gain but that of domination, the need to remain the elite of society, the need to remain a self-regulated profession. The hegemonic power possessed by the AARF was so great that this, coupled with the assistance of accounting discourse, enabled the AARF to discourage critics from expressing their point of view. Some critics were effectively convinced that they were a minority in their thinking who misunderstood what the AARF was proposing.

Although some critics were silenced, others were not so easily convinced, resulting in an endless hegemonic struggle as the dominance of the AARF was challenged. To conquer the threats of these vocal critics and secure its status, the actions of the AARF began to move through a process that can be likened to the moments of the translation process of power. This preoccupation with the need to maintain domination meant that very little development was evident throughout the decade in question towards finding an adequate alternative method to historical cost.

No one brought more grief to the AARF than Professor Ray Chambers. A well respected academic, Professor Chambers devoted much of his career to the measurement debate and advocated the CoCoA method of measurement. Professor Chambers along with other academics and practitioners began to question why after so much time and effort a resolution was still so far. The real motives of the AARF began to be questioned. What made Professor Chambers different to other critics, was that the deceiving discourse used by the AARF in order to create a hegemonic environment in which the AARF wanted to be the dominant actor, did not succeed in silencing Professor Ray Chambers.

As members of the academic and business community became more vocal the AARF began to feel vulnerable as their existence became questioned. Despite apparent efforts by the AARF to resolve the measurement dilemma, little had been accomplished in resolving the measurement debate as the AARF invested a great deal of energy in combating the ever

increasing criticism and creating a hegemonic environment, in which, the AARF would be the dominant actor. Thus maintaining its dominance and protect its own economic self – interest.

In order to establish a hegemonic environment and maintain its dominance, the AARF needed to convince “other actors” that the problem was serious and that a solution had to be found, whilst at the same time persuading “other actors”, academics and practitioners alike, that the AARF was the only group able to effectively search for an adequate solution. The AARF needed to portray itself as agents of public interest, more importantly as the only group capable of solving such complex problems. Archival research has revealed that at the time the two accounting bodies concluded

that it is in the interests of the community that a professionally qualified accountant should be recognisable and clearly discernible from a person who may hold himself out to be an "accountant" but who has insufficient training or experience to enable him competently to discharge the duties and responsibilities which may be entrusted to him (Kurtovic 2002,183).

If the AARF could demonstrate its ability to solve complex and controversial problems, it would be better equipped to enrol actors into the belief that the AARF was the only group able to keep a watchful eye over accounting issues and standards. In turn this would justify the existence of the AARF and reiterate its dominance. Should the solution be derived from a practitioner or academic outside the AARF, their existence would be questioned and their dominance eroded. The AARF was therefore, preoccupied with ensuring that only suggestions made by the AARF would be seen as valid, and any criticism would have to be discredited. The following are examples of such acts undertaken by the AARF, all of which are substantiated by primary source documents obtained through the AARF archives.

By 1974 the AARF had prepared and proposed ED 8, which focused on accounting for inflation, which coincidentally was almost identical to the already issued ED 8 in the United Kingdom. An easy remedy was to be the adoption of what had already been proposed elsewhere. This was justified on the basis that the initial criticism, which was traditionally associated with new proposals that moved away from the norm, would be minimised. The logic being, that if the issue in question was considered elsewhere, the solution must be worthwhile. It would appear that this logic had been adopted by the AARF on many occasions, with the proposed suggestion to adopt ED 8, being one of them. Furthermore, the AARF had, on numerous occasions, deliberately stalled its activities awaiting the fate of their overseas counterparts. As the following extract from a letter written to Kenley by the Joint Standing Committee indicates

my Chairman [from the Institute] suggests that it would be wise to wait and see the results of the research being undertaken by overseas Institutes (Kurtovic 2000, 196).

It could be argued that walking in the footsteps of our overseas counterparts could prove beneficial as any potential problems with the proposals put forward could be addressed based on the results overseas. Unfortunately, this stalling tactic had become well recognised and it did not take very long for the critics to reappear. Once again the most vocal of all critics came from Professor Chambers. Although comments made by Professor Chambers were publicly dismissed, within the AARF the extent of their possible implications were acknowledged. Members of the Administrative Sub-Committee, within the AARF, were supplied with a copy of a prepared reply to the criticisms made by Professor Chambers. After lengthy discussions between members of the profession, it was decided that it would be

beneficial if an article on CoCoA prepared by Professor Chambers was published in the *Australian Accountant*. In addition to this, it was also thought best to publish the prepared response to the criticism voiced by Professor Chambers. This was done in the hope that it would satisfy the Professor and he would no longer resort to criticising the proposed alternate methods of inflation accounting

The advantage of publishing Ray's article is that he cannot then claim that he did not receive reasonable publicity of his view (Kurtovic 2000, 208).

Perhaps in doing so, the AARF wanted to give the impression that the issue was being adequately dealt with and at the same time, discrediting critics such as Professor Chambers. These activities in turn could be seen as providing a smokescreen which would protect the AARF from future backlash and allow it to continue on the path of domination. Alternatively, the AARF responded to other critics by convincing them to be of a minority group, who in essence misunderstood what the AARF proposed.

despite the extent of my disagreement in principle with the proposed statement, I support its issue. This is partly because I am in a minority of one in this respect, but more particularly the need for a system of Current Cost Accounting is urgent. Once the proposed statement has been issued it will have my support, and I will continue to work towards the development of additions and amendments within the AASC (Kurtovic 2000, 219).

Alternatively the AARF would respond to letters of criticism in an evasive manner choosing to ignore the issue of concern, with the responding letter of acknowledgement concentrating on apologising for the delay in response rather than on the content of the initial letter, with no reference made to the allegations put forward (Kurtovic 2002). It was responses like these that assisted the AARF in dealing with possible predators, which threatened their possessive, strive for domination.

Conversely, the AARF would also respond by deceiving the general public regarding what the general business community did or did not favour. For example when the AARF would issue exposure drafts and or working guides there would be a tendency to dress up the responses received, if the AARF's expectations were not met. This is, if the responses received by the AARF were not as positive as perhaps expected by the AARF, the results were not released. Instead the AARF would claim success and declare that a majority of respondents agreed with the suggestions put forward by the AARF. Unfortunately, the written submissions received, which were usually filed away and marked "*never to be released*", seldom supported the claims of success made by the AARF. Such a reaction is two-fold, not only was the wider business community led to believe that there was a majority support for the work of the AARF, thus redefining the dominance of the AARF, such a scheme would also silence most critics, as they would be given the indication that they were of a minority.

By looking back at the activities of the AARF regarding asset measurement, the pattern of recycling becomes clear, and the allegation, that the profession is guilty of "doing nothing", is substantiated. Clearly the AARF has put its own economic self - interest ahead of the public interest, protecting its status quo rather than developing and implementing lasting and credible solutions. The AARF's penchant need to maintain its dominance and status quo had come at a price; the protection of public interest. Being in direct contrast to Addie, whose passion, even in the face of criticism and dishonour proved her supremacy.

CONCLUSION

When we begin our research journey we begin with an idea, a theme, an argument, a passion, we begin with our mirage. As skilled researchers we know where we want to go, and we know our destination; the challenge, is not reaching our destination, but is turning our mirage into a reality. It is easy to see why we often describe our research success as coincidence or good luck, but in reality as researchers we set our path and then we choose to travel down it, serendipity seems to be the extended hand that helps us over the hurdles along our journey, the reassurance that the journey must continue the destination must be reached and it will be.

So long as I get somewhere, Alice added as an explanation.

Oh, you're sure to do that, said the Cat, if you only walk long enough (Carroll 1982, 57).

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